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A NOTE ON *PIRENELLA DORIAE* (HORNUNG & MERMOD, 1926)



In 1926 HORNUNG and MERMOD (1926: 208-209) described a new species, *Argyropeza doriae*, on the basis of a single, apparently juvenile specimen, collected in 1878 by the « Rapido » expedition on Saldadin Island, Zeila in the Gulf of Tadjourah. They later reported (1928: 113-118) that this was a polymorphic species, and that many specimens were found among the lots collected by Issel and Beccari in 1870 at various localities in the Red Sea. In his recent review of the deep-sea genus *Argyropeza*, HOUBRICK (1980: 3) states that this species does not belong to that genus, because its protoconch, shell sculpture and aperture do not fit the limits of *Argyropeza*.

In October 1971 a crack of about 40 m long and 0.2-1.5 m wide was discovered in the Ras Muhammad raised fossil coral reef of the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula, Red Sea. This crack, which is situated about 150 m inland, is connected subterraneously with the open sea, and a peculiar anchialine fauna has established in it (POR & TSURNAMAL, 1973; TSURNAMAL, 1975). On October 3, 1977 I have collected in the so-called Elongated crack at a depth of 10-40 cm several specimens of a gastropod species, not previously reported from this habitat.

Subsequent study of material in the « Giacomo Doria » Museum of Natural History, Genova, revealed that these specimens are identical

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with those collected in 1870 by Issel and Beccari in Massaua, Red Sea, and labelled *Argyropeza doriae* Hornung & Mermod, 1926. Representatives of both lots, namely those collected by Issel and Beccari in Massaua, and by me in the Ras Muhammad crack, have been examined by Dr. R.S. HOUBRICK, who has placed them in the Potamidid genus *Pirenella*. Thus, this taxon should now be referred to as *P. doriae* (Hornung & Mermod, 1926).

The common Potamidid species in the Red Sea area is *P. cailliaudi* (Potiez & Michaud, 1838). It is listed (BARASH & DANIN, 1973; BARASH & DANIN, 1977) among the immigrant Indo-Pacific species, which have successfully colonized the Eastern Mediterranean. In terms of shell morphology and sculpture this species is indistinguishable from the Mediterranean species *P. conica* (Blainville, 1826) (YARON, 1978:116). Recently electrophoretic studies of enzymes of representatives of both species showed them to be identical (BARASH, in litt.). Accordingly, *P. cailliaudi* should be regarded as a junior synonym of *P. conica*.

Typical representatives of the Ras Muhammad and Massaua populations of *Pirenella doriae* differ from those of Red Sea representatives of *P. conica* both in shell size and in the lack of the prominent spiral sculpture of the latter. Until studies of the soft parts of the former are completed, *P. doriae* should be considered to be a separate species.

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